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VI.—THE PURPORT OF LYLY'S *ENDIMION*.

The Rev. Mr. N. J. Halpin¹ in 1843, followed by Professor G. P. Baker² in 1894 and Mr. R. Warwick Bond³ in 1902, have sought to explain *Endimion* as the vehicle of a personal allegory setting forth a contemporary court intrigue. These commentators have been duly followed in turn, with slight variations, by the historians F. G. Fleay⁴ in 1891, A. W. Ward⁵ in 1899, and F. E. Schelling⁶ in 1908. The existence of this allegory may be regarded, therefore, as generally accepted by authorities on the Elizabethan drama. The exponents of this personal allegory agree in recognizing that Lyly intended to represent the Queen in Cynthia, a point which no one is likely to dispute.⁷ They agree further in arguing that Endimion, the lover of Cynthia, represents Leicester, the favorite of Queen Elizabeth. From this basis three varieties of the allegory have been developed, in attempts to identify a third character, Tellus, the lady deserted by Endimion. Three ladies have been proposed, each of whom played a striking rôle in Leicester's career. Mr.

¹Shakespeare Soc., London, 1843. *Oberon's Vision in the Midsummer's Night's Dream. Illustrated by a comparison with Lyly's Endimion.*

²G. P. Baker: *Endymion*. New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1894.

³*The Complete Works of John Lyly*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1902.

⁴F. G. Fleay: *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama*. Reeves and Turner. L., 1891. II. 41.

⁵A. W. Ward: *A History of English Dramatic Literature*. Macmillan & Co. L., 1899. I, 289-93.

⁶F. E. Schelling: *Elizabethan Drama*. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1908, I, 127-32.

⁷This had been recognized before, as by Dilke: *Old English Plays*, L., 1814, and William Hazlitt: *Eliz. Lit.*, Lecture, II.

Halpin suggested Lady Sheffield, Leicester's second wife; Professor Baker substituted for her Lady Essex, Leicester's third wife; and Mr. Bond set aside both in favor of Mary, Queen of Scots.

All three versions have two characteristics. First, they do not explain the plot of the play. Mr. Bond admits this repeatedly.¹ He says: "If Mary cannot be credited with any special plots against Leicester, no more can Lady Essex, and hardly, Lady Sheffield." Second, the versions are based, not on positive internal or external evidence, but solely, as Mr. Bond says, on: "a general correspondence between the main facts of the drama and the main facts of the history, a general consonance between the characters and situations of the personages with those of their models."² Such evidence, to be convincing, must be striking, the more so as it is conceded that we know of no fact in history corresponding to the main fact of the drama.

The contention of Mr. Halpin requires no extended discussion. Its deficiencies have been exposed sufficiently by both his successors.³ Tellus is represented by Lyly as a rival to Cynthia, on a plane distinctly above the other ladies of the court,— a representation which would be unrecognizable in the case of Lady Sheffield. Moreover, the final union of Tellus with her lover Corsites, involves the identification of Sir Edward Stafford as Corsites, whereas his character is quite incompatible with that of Corsites. Finally, Leicester's connection with

¹ Bond, II, 90, 102.

² Bond, III, 91.

³ Bond, III, 91. In discussing the proposed personal allegory I have allowed for the contention of Mr. Bond that in many places Lyly intended the allegory to be obscure. This eliminates the minor characters.

Lady Sheffield, contracted in 1573, had ceased to interest the court years before Lyly can have written *Endimion*.

Leicester's sensational marriage with Lady Essex in 1578, when news of it was divulged to the Queen, brought upon him marked disgrace. Professor Baker conceived that *Endimion* was presented as a covert excuse and apology for Leicester's conduct. The difficulties which beset this interpretation have been set forth in a measure by Mr. Bond,¹—but only in a measure. Professor Baker's argument requires as a date for the play the autumn of 1579.² At this moment, however, Lyly's patron and employer,³ the Earl of Oxford, was the last person to desire or permit the presentation of a play on behalf of his hereditary enemy Leicester.⁴ The temporary power of Oxford was concomitant with Leicester's disgrace. And this was the very date (September, 1579) of his famous quarrel with Leicester's nephew and heir, Philip Sidney, whom Oxford called a "puppy," yet failed to challenge when Sidney gave him the lie.⁵ This was not the moment for a protégé of Burghley⁶ and Oxford to plead in behalf of Leicester. Nor did Lyly do so when an opportunity presented itself. In describing the English court, in the second part of *Euphues* (written at this very time), Lyly

¹ Bond, III, *On the Allegory in Endimion*.

² Baker, p. xciv.

³ The second part of *Euphues*, issued early in 1580, is dedicated to: "My very good Lorde and Maister Edward de Vere, Earle of Oxenforde."

⁴ From *Leicester's Commonwealth* (ed. 1641, p. 47) it appears that Oxford's father, as well as his father-in-law Burghley, was a confirmed enemy of Leicester.

⁵ J. A. Symonds: *Sir Philip Sidney*, L., 1886, Macmillan & Co., pp. 66-9.

⁶ See the letter written by Lyly to Burghley from Oxford in 1574. Bond, I, 12-15.

praises Lord Burghley alone¹ and acknowledges his patronage.

To obtain this unpropitious date, Professor Baker is obliged to set aside, without reason,² the positive evidence of the title page of the printed play. Both the quarto and Blount's edition announce that *Endimion* was: "Played before the Queenes Maiestie at Greenewich on Candelmas day at night, by the Chyldren of Paules." This reduces the date to February 2nd of some year between 1579, when Lyly published *Euphues*, and 1591 when *Endimion* was published. But in 1580 and 1581, different plays were given by different companies.³ In 1582, 1583, and 1584, the Queen was not at Greenwich.⁴ In 1585, the Paul's Boys were not acting.⁵ External evidence, therefore, invalidates any date before 1586.⁶

A late date is equally impossible for *Endimion*. In 1589 and 1591, the Queen was not at Greenwich.⁷ In

¹ Bond, II, 198.

² See Bond, III, 503. Note for p. 17, l. 5. This shows that Professor Baker labored under a misapprehension as to the reading of the title page in Blount's edition.

³ *Revels Accounts* (ed. 1908).

⁴ In 1582, the Queen was at Rochester with Anjou (Nichols' *Progresses*, II, 345); in 1583, at Windsor (*Revels Accounts*, ed. 1908, p. 349); in 1584, at Whitehall (Thomas Birck: *Queen Elizabeth*, L., 1754, I, 45).

⁵ Baker, p. cxxvii.

⁶ These considerations, which forbid an early dating of the play, are confirmed by the absence of any print or registration of *Endimion* during the discontinuance of the Paul's Boys, although three plays by Lyly were published or registered in 1584 and 1585. Again, an examination of the Euphuism in Lyly's plays indicates that although *Endimion* ranks with the earlier group of Lyly's plays, nevertheless, with due allowance for its length, it should be placed after all those which were published or registered by 1585. Compare Clarence Griffin Child: *John Lyly and Euphuism*, Erlangen, 1894, p. 99. Also Bond, II, 289.

⁷ In 1589, she was at Whitehall (Nichols' *Progresses*, II, 26-7), and in 1591, at Richmond (Nichols, III, 74, and Birck, I, 63).

1589-90 the Paul's Boys played before the Queen three times at Richmond; but in the payment made to them on March 10th there is no mention of a performance at Greenwich in February.¹ The date of *Endimion* is, therefore, February 2nd, 1586-8.²

The former date is adopted by Mr. Bond avowedly from the exigencies of his allegory. Later than 1586, a play in which Mary, Queen of Scots, figured as Tellus would be unthinkable; earlier, the identification of Mary's gaoler, Sir Amyas Paulet, as Corsites would be impossible.³ But the difficulties which confront Mr. Bond's version of the allegory are not less fatal than those which disqualify Lady Sheffield and Lady Essex. Mr. Bond admits that the imprisonment of Tellus in charge of Corsites forces him to accept in either Sir Amyas Paulet or his predecessor, the Earl of Shrewsbury, "an ill representative" of Corsites.⁴ To avoid this difficulty, he expounds Corsites as a composite of Paulet and Shrewsbury. When Corsites is rugged and inflexible, he represents Paulet; when indulgent and easily enticed, he represents Shrewsbury. This hybrid Corsites will not serve to explain the fact that Corsites is given to Tellus in marriage: for Mary did not wed either of her gaolers. Moreover, Mr. Bond cannot spare to Corsites the whole of Shrewsbury. He requires that Shrewsbury shall represent also

¹ Bond, III, 111.

² In 1588, the Paul's Boys played repeatedly before the Queen at Greenwich (*Revels Accts.*). Fleay, therefore, dated the play 1588. But since the Queen in April, 1585, commanded the formation of a company of Paul's Boys (Baker, p. cxxvii), the accidental gap in the Revels Accounts in no wise disqualifies 1586 and 1587, though in 1587 the impending execution of Mary, Queen of Scots and the mourning for Sir Philip Sidney may have told against such performances.

³ Bond, III, 11.

⁴ Bond, III, 93.

Geron, the virtuous exile from court who has charge of the fountain for faithful lovers.¹ But he suggests Shrewsbury for Corsites as the gaoler whom Mary by blandishment seduces from his duty, and whose wife charged him with gross incontinence. Mr. Bond, therefore, would have Lyly represent Shrewsbury, in Corsites, as culpably immoral; in Geron, as austere virtuous.

This remarkable dovetailing is not supported by unmistakable allusions in the play. Such arguments are not advanced by Mr. Bond. He contends only for a "general correspondence" of facts, characters, and situations. The keystone of his position is the general representation of Tellus as a much-courted rival of the Queen, once courted by Leicester, and later imprisoned by the Queen. Such a description suggests to us Mary as it suggests no other person.² But Mr. Bond fails to explain Lyly's intention. If Endimion represents Leicester, the play must have been written to please Leicester.³ Mr. Bond does not show how Leicester could have been pleased, or how Lyly could have supposed that he might be pleased, by such an unearthing of his youthful association with Mary, now a quarter of a century past, especially at a moment when Catholic plots were rife, and war against the Catholics was imminent. The play, on this hypothesis, represents Leicester as subject to Mary's influence. To

¹ Geron is not himself a faithful lover (see *Endimion*, III, iii), because he separated from his wife when she engaged in the "vile Arte of enchaunting" (*Endimion*, v, iii, 258).

² Bond, III, 89. Yet Tellus is represented, unlike Mary, as a member of the Queen's court, as one of her "train." See *Endimion*, v, iii, 12.

³ A hypothesis that Oxford, who probably composed plays (see Bond, I, 24), instigated Lyly to write *Endimion* as a subtle attack on Leicester, cannot be advanced in view of the entirely complimentary portrayal of *Endimion*.

represent a court favorite as involved in treasonable practices is an odd way to seek to please him.¹ But, more than this, the resemblance of Tellus and Mary, which appeals to us, may not then have had equal force.

To test Mr. Bond's hypothesis from a more intimate point of view, it is worth while to consider the actual situation at the court. In the winter of 1585-6 Leicester was absent in the Low Countries. He had incurred in January the violent displeasure of the Queen² by flagrant disobedience of her explicit orders. Yielding to pressure, he had accepted in the Queen's name the sovereignty of the Low Countries. He had thus become in the public eye the extreme champion of the Protestant cause. No position would appear to be less likely to suggest enthrallment by Mary, Queen of Scots.³

A more striking interpretation was at that moment inevitable. Thomas Dudley at this time wrote to Leicester⁴—on February 11th: "It was told her Majesty, that my Lady [Leicester's wife, Lady Essex] was prepared presently to come over to your Excellency, with such a train of Ladies and Gentlemen, and such rich coaches, litters, and side saddles, as her Majesty had none such, and that there should be such a court of Ladies, as should far surpass her Majesty's court here. This information (though most false) did not a little stir

¹ To construe the play as a threat by Leicester to take up with Mary unless granted an extraordinary favor is inadmissible because the author must then have been closely associated with Leicester, and not, as Lyly was, with Leicester's enemies.

² Compare the letters of Burghley, February 7th, and Thomas Duddely, February 11th (Hardwicke's *State Papers*, II, 298).

³ Tellus (Latin for *earth*) might more rationally suggest to the audience the territory of the Low Countries.

⁴ Hardwicke's *State Papers*, II, 298.

her Majesty to extreme choler and dislike of all your doings there, saying with great oaths, she would have no more Courts under her obeysance but her own." Here, indeed, was a Tellus rivalling the splendor of Cynthia. With this rumor rife at court, many of Lyly's audience might be led to identify Tellus with Lady Essex. If *Endimion* was played at Greenwich, February 2nd, 1586, Lyly had grave reasons to fear the displeasure of the Queen and of Leicester's friends at such an identification, and was only prudent in his prologue to the Queen to beg of his hearers not to "apply pastimes."

Thus, in a new form, Professor Baker's contention that Tellus represents Lady Essex, requires consideration. It might be urged that even in 1586 Leicester still had occasion to apologize for his marriage with Lady Essex. An anonymous writer in 1584 accuses Leicester of: "now confessing, now forswearing, now dissembling the marriage: as he will always yet keep a voyd place for a new surcontract with any other, when occasion shall require."¹ In precisely this way *Endimion* uses Tellus.² The enmity of the Queen toward Lady Essex was such that she was forbidden the court; while Lady Essex, as the same writer states: "raged many months after against her Majesty and is not cold yet; but remaineth as it were a sworn enemy, for that injury."³ Under these conditions, it might suit Leicester's purpose to be represented as in the power of Lady Essex, enchanted by her into an engagement, from which the Queen's favor alone can redeem him. The final marriage of Lady Essex to Corsites becomes intelligible as a parallel to Leicester's actual proposal to

¹ *Leicester's Commonwealth*, ed. 1641, p. 20.

² *Endimion*, II, i.

³ *Leicester's Commonwealth*, ed. 1641, pp. 98-9.

his second wife that she set aside their relations and marry another. Lady Sheffield in time did this. Since the second wife was so disposed of, why not the third? Moreover, a suitable Corsites appears in the Master of the Horse, Sir Christopher Blount, who did marry Lady Essex two years before the play was printed.

If anyone chose to propose this interpretation, he might reasonably claim that the occasion, purpose, and plot of the play, as well as the personalities and relations of the chief characters, were plausibly accounted for. But he would have to encounter one insuperable objection. The play must have been written primarily to please the Queen. Tellus is represented throughout the play, as Mr. Bond notes,¹ on a plane quite comparable to that of the Queen, with whom she is repeatedly contrasted. She receives, indeed, the royal title of respect.² Since Elizabeth was already infuriated by the ostentatiousness of Lady Essex this could not have pleased her. Furthermore, Endimion, in one scene,³ weighs in the balance the merits of his two loves. He considers the beauty, the wisdom, and humor of Tellus, and does not find her lacking. It is only in *majesty* that she yields to Cynthia. The Queen, then, hears Leicester comparing her with Lady Essex, and finds that she is preferred for her station only, not for her personal accomplishments. The pleasure of Elizabeth at receiving such a malapert compliment is to be imagined rather than described.

Since Tellus cannot be identified as any lady prominently connected with Leicester, the assumption that Endimion represents Leicester is seriously undermined.

¹ *Endimion*, I, i, 12-32; v, iii, 145-51.

² Bond, III, 91.

³ *Endimion*, II, iii, 11-15.

Endimion is unmarried,—a condition hardly compatible with Leicester's three marriages. Endimion, moreover, contrasts forcibly with the soldier Corsites, whereas Leicester from 1585 to 1588 figured conspicuously in military affairs. While there is nothing distinctive about Endimion which inevitably suggests Leicester,¹ there is, on the other hand, good reason to hold that Leicester is not the courtier whom Lyly would be most likely to portray.² Oxford, as well as Leicester, represented himself as an enamored servant of the Queen.³ Lyly was certainly more likely to portray thus his patron, than his patron's enemy. But there were many enamored servants of the Queen. In accord with Lyly's disclaimer of personal references, we should assume that he depicts in Endimion not any one, but the type.

Prior to entertaining new conjectures, it is in order to inquire on what grounds the commentators have assumed that there is in *Endimion* any personal allegory. The author deliberately warns his hearers against doing so. "We hope," he says in the prologue, "none will apply pastimes, because they are fancies . . . Wee present neither Comedie, nor Tragedie, nor storie, nor anie thing, but that whosoeuer heareth may say this, why heere is a tale of the Man in the Moone." The author implies that *Endimion* is not a veiled record of actual occurrences. Nevertheless, the commentators set aside this denial as an instance of "qui s'excuse s'accuse," an

¹The letter of Leicester cited by Professor Baker (p. xlvii), does not differ markedly from the protestations of other servants of the Queen. Compare the letters of Hatton in Sir Harris Nicolas: *Memoirs . . . of Sir Christopher Hatton*, L., 1847.

²For a reply to Professor Baker's suggestion of a connection between Leicester and Lyly, see Bond, III, 95, n. 1.

³John Hannah: *Courtly Poets*, L., 1892, Geo. Bell & Co.

evidence of "something in the performance personally offensive to individuals."¹ They would have Lyly not only insincere, but impolitic. They assume that he purposely prepared a play with allusions which he feared to have understood.²

The grounds for this assumption are not cogent. From the circumstance that Lyly compliments the Queen in his representation of Cynthia, the commentators infer that the remainder of the play must glance at individuals.³ But other plays, as Peele's *Arraignement of Paris* and Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, similarly compliment the Queen without involving, so far as we are yet informed, personages of her court. Other plays by Lyly are cited by Mr. Bond as containing personal reference to the Queen alone.⁴ This nullifies the argument. Mr. Bond makes it a second point that: "The language, too, used by Endimion under Cynthia's displeasure is far more appropriate to the Earl of Leicester, suddenly deprived of a favour long enjoyed, than to the shepherd of Latmos."⁵ More appropriate certainly to the genus courtier; but Mr. Bond advances nothing distinctive of any one courtier. Again, he cites

¹ Halpin, p. 51; Baker, p. xlii; Bond, III, 85. Lyly's allusion in the epilogue to "the malicious that seek to overthrow us with threats" need not be personal. More plausibly it refers to the enemies of the Paul's Boys.

² More reasonably one might argue that during the rehearsals such undesirable identifications were proposed. At that time, as (conceivably) in January, 1586, events may have transpired rendering such identifications possible. But in any case the nature of the play, in representing Cynthia's court, rendered attempts at identifications inevitable, and afforded sufficient occasion for Lyly's caveat.

³ Halpin, p. 49-50; Bond, III, 84-5. Professor Baker did not argue at length for the existence of the allegory, contenting himself with proposing identifications which were certainly more plausible than those of Mr. Halpin or Mr. Bond.

⁴ Bond, II, 256.

⁵ Bond, III, 85. He refers to *Endimion*, II, i.

Endimion's dream of a picture of wolves barking at Cynthia, in which Endimion beholds Ingratitude, Treachery, Envy, and creatures which try to suck the lifeblood of "a princely Eagle." "Admit the dream as allegorical," he says, "and the rest must become wholly or partly so."¹ Not only is this a non sequitur, but the only touch of personal allegory here is the Eagle, whom we know from a parallel passage in *Euphues*,² to be a symbol for the Queen. Such are the scanty positive arguments in favor of the existence of a personal allegory.

The motivating reason is of another sort. Mr. Bond inquires:³ "If the presentation and embroidery of the classical myth were the sole intention, what could have induced the author to drag so lovely a glimpse of ideality down to the vulgar level of Court intrigue? . . . And would a free imagination have gone out of its way to construct the absolutely unessential Corsites, with his futile effort, his pinchings and slumberings, effecting nothing, leading to nothing . . . ?" In short, Mr. Bond cannot understand the play without this allegory. To be sure, he cannot understand the play with this allegory.⁴ In any case, Mr. Bond is persuaded that: "In *Endimion*, at any rate, the idea of the presence of something more than meets the eye is quite irresistible."⁵

Granting that *Endimion* now appears enigmatic, and

¹ Bond, III, 85.

² See Bond, II, 215, l. 21.

³ Bond, III, 84.

⁴ Mr. Bond admits with reference to his version of the allegory:—"Its weak point is, doubtless, the want of any definite intrigue against Leicester by Mary and Lady Shrewsbury; but the same weakness is inherent in the theory of Mr. Halpin, and in Mr. Baker's emendation of it." (Bond, III, 102). The plot of *Tellus* against Endimion is the plot of the play.

⁵ Bond, III, 84. Similarly Halpin, p. 49.

respecting the author's deprecation of applying his "fancies," the natural inference is that *Endimion* contains impersonal allegory. In fact, impersonal allegory does exist in *Endimion*, and has been universally recognized.¹ I refer to the physical allegory in which Cynthia represents the moon, Tellus the earth, and Floscula a floweret. This allegory may be extended to new identifications of Scintilla and Favilla as sparks,² subordinate to Semele as flame.³ The names of Dipsas and Corsites appear to be derived from natural history, the former being a serpent whose bite causes violent thirst, the latter a stone used as a remedy for venomous bites and for drugged or enchanted persons.⁴ Since Dipsas enchanted Endimion on the lunar bank, Corsites is appropriately employed by Tellus for his removal. But, beyond this point, physical identifications become implausible. They will not account readily for the plot or for certain characters, as Endimion and Eumenides.⁵ The physical allegory does not make clear the meaning of the play.

However, as Mr. Bond has observed, "the allegory of *Endimion* is twofold."⁶ With the physical allegory, and the slender material of the classical myth, Lyly has interwoven "a drama of court life." A drama of life in general is what Professor Henry Morley⁷ would have us

¹ Bond, III, 81-3.

² Lyly's intention is here clearly marked. See *Endimion*, II, ii, 19-25, 52.

³ Cf. III, i, 14; also Beaumont: *The Glance*: "Two flames, two Semeles, dwell in those eyes."

⁴ For Corsites see F. de Mely: *Les Lapidaires de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age*, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1898. Index.

⁵ It is possible that the character Endimion may have been associated, at some stage in the composition of the play, with the fish Scolopidus. Cf. *Endimion*, II, i, 31 and Bond, III, 506.

⁶ Bond, III, 81.

⁷ *English Writers*, IX, 203-8.

believe. He proposes a spiritual or religious allegory. "Throughout," he says, "there is also set forth clearly an impersonal allegory that touches the relation of the mind of man to Earth and Heaven." Professor Morley speaks of "the spiritual aspirations of Endymion," and of "his thoughts of Heaven," as the significance of Endimion's reverent love for Cynthia. He interprets the plot of Tellus to win back Endimion's love as "the spells of Earth over the soul given to heavenward aspiration."

Alluring as this conception is, it cannot be reconciled with the data of the play. Cynthia does not represent Heaven. In the opening scene Eumenides, the constant friend of Endimion, declares to him: "If you be enamored of anything above the Moone, your thoughts are ridiculous, for that thinges immortal are not subject to affections." Endimion replies: "My love is placed neither under the Moone nor above." Cynthia is not represented as an immortal: for when Tellus asks Endimion: "Wilt thou make her immortal?"—he replies: "No."¹ Again, Eumenides checks Endimion in his adoration: "Stay there Endimion, thou that committest Idolatry, wilt straight blaspheme."² These, among many, indications make it clear that Cynthia does not represent Heaven. Cynthia is beyond cavil a Queen in the midst of her court, addressed as "Your Maiestie," and "Your Highnesse."³ It is her "virtues" that are immortal.⁴ The implicit reference to Elizabeth, the royal spectator, whose courtiers customarily figured her under the names Diana and Cyn-

¹ *Endimion*, II, i, p. 33.

² *Endimion*, I, i.

³ *Endimion*, III, i, 59; IV, iii, 96; V, iii, 188, 233.

⁴ *Endimion*, V, iii, 142.

thia is repeatedly apparent,¹ and affects materially the whole conception of the play.

In the classical myth a goddess, overcome by the beauty of a sleeping youth, impulsively kisses him. The dignity and majesty of the Queen compelled Lyly to represent the kiss as a favor, conceded only at entreaty, for an altruistic reason, without suspicion of amorous desire.² The element of personal affection is therefore transferred to the sleeper and becomes inevitably the kind of reverent semi-religious adoration which courtiers were then accustomed to pay the Queen,—a transfiguration of loyal homage in the light of that Renaissance worship of beauty in woman, which Professor J. B. Fletcher has recently set forth so ably.³ Endimion thus becomes a devotee of that Heavenly Beauty, best typified by Cynthia, to the contemplation of which the lover by degrees is raised. By a series of steps he passes from the love of Earthly Beauty to the adoration of Heavenly Beauty. This ultimate infidelity of the lover to his primal passion for Earthly Beauty affords Lyly his opportunity for a plot. The representative of Earthly Beauty, Tellus, in seeking to regain Endimion's love, compasses by magic the sleep from which Cynthia's kiss miraculously liberates him. In the second scene, Tellus unfolds this plot.⁴ She proposes to cast "all allurements of pleasure" before his eyes, and cause "dissolute thoughts" to take root in his head, "insomuch that he shall slake that love which he now voweth to Cynthia and burne in mine." "All his virtues," she exclaims, "will I shadow with vices; his person . . . shall he decke

¹ Bond, III, 85.

² *Endimion*, v, i, 17-24.

³ *The Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1908. Cf. also *Modern Philology*, April, 1908, J. B. Fletcher: *Did Astrophel Love Stella?*

⁴ *Endimion*, I, ii, 41-61.

with such rich Roabes, as he shall forget it in his owne person; his sharp wit . . . shall he use, in flattering of my face, and deuising Sonnets in my favour. The prime of his youth and pride of his time, shall be spent in melancholy passions, careless behauiours, untamed thoughts, and unbridled affections." Such were the characteristics of the Elizabethan courtly lover. Endimion in this guise would be, or would seem to be, once more the servant of Earthly Beauty. The scenic representation of this temporary triumph of Tellus is Endimion's sleep on the Lunary bank, where he reposes till the approach of age;¹ and the appropriateness of this use of lunary is founded in its supposed magical property, that it "causeth nothinge but dreames of weddings and daunces."² In these dissolute thoughts and visions of alluring pleasures, the lover wastes away his youth, a captive to the enchantments of Earthly Beauty.

The triumph of Tellus, however, is imperfect. The lunary, as moonwort, is an emblem of Endimion's constancy to Cynthia. She plots further to have him removed from the lunary bank, and her agent in this fruitless attempt is Corsites. Corsites is enamored of Tellus, is a devotee of Earthly Beauty, and therefore represents in contrast to Endimion, Earthly or Sensual Love.³ It is by the force of sensual desire that Earthly Beauty seeks to remove the lover from his constant devotion to Heavenly

¹ *Endimion*, II, iii, 32; V, i, 50. To represent *Endimion* in the acts described by Tellus would have been discourteous to the Queen.

² Lyly: *Sapho and Phao*, III, iii, 43.

³ The characterization of Corsites (Bond, III, 91) as a soldier of great physical strength, tough and unsmoothed nature, and honest simplicity, will be seen to tally with the powerful, untameable, unambiguous nature of desire. His representation as a soldier accords with the mythology of Mars and Venus.

Beauty. When Corsites makes the attempt, he is attacked by fairies, who "with a song pinch him, and he falleth asleep."¹ This is, in folklore, the punishment allotted to sensual affection.² When Corsites awakens, he appears "more like a Leopard than a man,"³—an allusion to the spots of sensuality. The injuries of Corsites are healed by applying lunary,⁴ as the prickings of sensual love are eased by thoughts of marriage. The ultimate marriage of Corsites and Tellus represents the appropriate union of Earthly Love with Earthly Beauty.

Lyly's machinery for the solution of the plot is set in motion by the pity of Cynthia for Endimion. She despatches various messengers in quest of a remedy,⁵ and one of them, Eumenides, the constant friend of Endimion, learns from an oracle that Cynthia's kiss has the magical property of arousing the sleeper.⁶ Whether Lyly purposed to carry his allegorical meaning further into the details of the play, or permitted it, like the physical allegory, to lapse into obscurity or oblivion, there are, at all events, other resemblances which fancy may convert into identifications. Thus, Eumenides may be thought to represent

¹ *Endimion*, iv, iii.

² Bond, III, 83. Without this significance the episode would be, as Mr. Bond considers it (II, 275), unnecessary and "a blemish." But the contrast of Corsites and Endimion, of Tellus and Cynthia, is fundamental.

³ *Endimion*, iv, iii, 84.

⁴ *Endimion*, iv, iii, 129.

⁵ *Endimion*, III, i, 46-51.

⁶ Lyly gives no indication of an allegorical meaning in this effect of the kiss. Yet, by a happy coincidence it was held by exponents of Platonic love (cf. Castiglione: *Il Cortegiano*, iv, 66), that in a kiss the souls of the lovers blended in the breath, so that the predominating will came to govern both bodies. Thus Cynthia's kiss might exalt Endimion, recalling him from his baser dreams of weddings and dances.

Honor,¹ and Semele, Fame.² Dipsas, the sorceress invoked by Earthly Beauty to enchant the Platonic lover, would seem to be Pleasure;³ while the husband who deserted her, and became custodian of the fountain for faithful lovers, is perhaps Virtue.⁴ The Castle in the Desert may be interpreted as the Castle of Fancy.⁵ But the less these particulars affect the main action of the play, the fewer are the data for identification, and the greater the improbability that Lyly cared to involve an explicit allegorical meaning. Such characters as Bagoa and Floscula, Pythagoras, Gyptes and the lords appear

¹ Eumenides, as the faithful lover who alone can read the oracle of the fountain, who never reveals the name of his beloved (v, i, 17), and will sacrifice his tongue to save hers (v, iii, 228), is still more faithfully the friend of Endimion, who learns from the oracle how to save his friend rather than how to possess his love, and never urges his courtship during Endimion's sleep (v, i, 157). Thus Honor desists from courting Fame while the lover is enthralled by thoughts of marriage, and thus Honor would lose his tongue to preserve that of Fame. (Cf. also *Endimion*, i, ii, 50).

² Semele, whose light nature and waspish tongue are insisted on (cf. p. 183), is yet beloved of Eumenides, who declares: "The least minute being spent in the getting of Semele is more worth than the whole world." (iii, iv, 103). Such was the typical Renaissance attitude toward Fame.

³ Dipsas, as the agent of Tellus against Endimion, which Tellus announced as "allurements of pleasure" (i, ii, 42-3), should represent Pleasure. This meaning is conveyed in part by the literal signification of Dipsas, a serpent whose bite causes violent thirst. Apart from her recourse to sorcery, she is an acceptable person (v, iii, 258-70). The function of Pleasure in the plot is to slacken the lover's devotion to Heavenly Beauty (i, iv, 32).

⁴ Geron, cast off by his wife Pleasure when she took to sorcery, then left the court, and lived "fiftie winters" (iii, iv, 5) in melancholy and solitude beside the fountain of faithful love. This would seem to be Virtue, cast off by pleasure, and long since an absentee from court.

⁵ The Castle in the Desert, to which Cynthia condemns Tellus in the custody of Corsites (iii, i, 40-2) and in which Tellus weaves only images of Endimion (v, iii, 251-2), seems to be the Castle of Fancy, where Sensual Love holds Earthly Beauty in his power.

to be little more than conveniences;¹ while Sir Tophas, who may represent Vainglory in contrast to Eumenides, is associated with maids and pages to provide a comic underplot. The play appears to be a conglomerate, and somewhat "ridiculous for the method," as Lyly admits.² The main incidents and characters, however, though unfamiliar to us, were such as Lyly's audience of enamored courtiers and love-liking ladies could readily interpret. It must be borne in mind that this was a moment when courtly love-making was the vogue, when courtiers and court ladies talked Euphuism, and were tending to the antics described by Jonson in *Cynthia's Revels*. Indeed, the present explanation might well seem halting and imperfect to:

"The absolute Castilio,—
He that can all the points of courtship show."³

Mr. Bond, in allusion to Professor Morley's religious allegory, admits the presence of an impersonal allegory, other than the physical allegory, in *Endimion*, saying that "this ideal aspect of love, and the contrast of such with more earthly passion, certainly forms one aspect of Lyly's play."⁴ Without perceiving the scope and character of this allegory, he senses its presence. He contends only that "such a mystical interpretation" cannot be the main purport of the play. He maintains, therefore, that there

¹ Panelion, nevertheless, seems to typify Compassion (παρ ἔλεος). Cf. *Endimion*, iv, iii, 69-71. Gyptes represents the lore of Egypt, as Pythagoras the philosophy of Greece. Bagoa is probably a feminine form of Bagoas. Floscula, perhaps, conveys also the figurative sense of rhetoric. For several suggestions concerning the minor characters I am indebted to Prof. G. L. Kittredge.

² The Prologue.

³ Marston: *Satires*, i, 27-8.

⁴ Bond, iii, 103.

is superimposed upon the physical and "mystical" allegories also a personal allegory. "It by no means follows," says Mr. Bond, "that because the Court allegory can be easily detached and leave the play still interesting and complete, that no such allegory is intended."¹ This is to say that although the author says there is none, and although the play is "complete" without one, and although the plot of the play is not in accord with any particular one, we must still have a personal allegory. Why? Because the author has dragged "so lovely a glimpse of ideality down to the vulgar level of court intrigue." But this is true only on the assumption of a personal allegory. Because of "the absolutely unessential Corsites." But he proves to be absolutely essential. Because, then, "its interests would be enhanced."² Here Mr. Bond is on secure ground. Though the purport of *Endimion* is throughout, transparently, to compliment the Queen, Lyly by his prologue shows consciousness that his audience were likely to seek identifications. We still await success in this endeavor. Meantime, a reason for supporting the author in his denial is afforded by his treatment of Semele. As the beloved of Eumenides, this character stands among those who must be supposed to have been complimented. Yet Cynthia styles her: "Semele, in whose speech and thoughts are only contempt and sourenesse,"³ and again as: "the very waspe of all women whose tongue stingeth as much as an Adder's tooth."⁴ Her lover calls her "of all women the most froward,"⁵ and tells her that her nature "hath been alwaies accounted light." This is hardly a style of compliment which Lyly might expect

¹ Bond, III, 84.

² Bond, III, 84.

³ *Endimion*, IV, iii, 67.

⁴ *Endimion*, V, iii, 204.

⁵ *Endimion*, III, iv, 60.

a lady to take pleasure in.¹ Still less could it please her lover. This lover, according to Mr. Bond, is the courteous Sir Philip Sidney, and Semele is the lady whom he celebrated as Stella. "I do not know," says Mr. Bond, "whether waspishness can correctly be attributed to Stella." On the contrary, Sidney mentions among her virtues:

"That conversation sweet, where such high comforts be." ²

To conclude: the suggestion of Mr. Halpin and his followers that there is a personal allegory in *Endimion* proves to be an assumption made without evidence. The variations of this allegory which have been proposed fail to tally with the data of the play, and fail to explain the plot. The author expressly warns his audience not to interpret the play in this manner, and treats one of his chief characters in a way incongruous with any personal reference. The significance of the play is explained in another manner, consonant with the fashion of courtly lovemaking then in vogue. The case for a personal allegory, if it is to be maintained, will have to be restated on better grounds.

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¹ *Endimion*, III, i, 15. These characteristics are suitable to the disagreeable side of Fame.

² *Astrophel and Stella*, st. 77. He indicates the manner in which Stella received his advances:

"She heard my complaints, and did not onely heare,
But them (so sweet is she) most sweetly sing." (St. 57).